

# THE CITY OF SAN DIEGO



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## NEWS RELEASE

### FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

July 24, 2003

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## Council Approves Funding for Expanded Fire Stations in Hillcrest and Mid-City

SAN DIEGO—A unanimous City Council approved a \$58 million funding plan Tuesday which will build new fire and lifeguard stations and replace or repair existing stations throughout the city, including improvements to and expansion of Fire Station 5 in Hillcrest and Fire Station 17 in Mid-City.

"Even in these difficult economic times, we need to maintain our public safety facilities," said Third District City Councilmember Toni Atkins. "This council continues to take a pro-active role in addressing deferred maintenance issues across the city, whether it's been in infrastructure, our park system, or public safety. Tuesday's action is another bold step in this direction."

Fire Station 5 in Hillcrest, located at 3902 Ninth Avenue, originally housed an engine and a truck company, but due to budget reductions in 1997, staffing for the truck crew was eliminated. Today, Station 5 houses a battalion chief and one crew that cross staffs both as engine and a truck. In designing a station to meet the public safety needs of our growing community, a station sized at 8,100 square feet—the current size of the station—can only accommodate one crew and one battalion chief.

In a densely populated and growing neighborhood such as Hillcrest, with very little open space available for relocation of the station, the only option is to expand the current facility. A size increase from 8,100 to 10,200 square feet will allow for the eventual need to place an additional crew of four persons to staff the truck company. When fully staffed, this station is the first line of support to Mission Valley and the downtown area.

Fire Station 17, located at 4206 Chamoune Avenue in City Heights, was initially planned at 6,400 square feet for an engine and ambulance. In designing a station to meet the public safety needs of the ever-growing Mid-City communities, an increase to 10,200 square feet is recommended.

Engine 17 is the fourth busiest engine in the nation and has twice the emergency response volume of other engines within the City of San Diego. This extreme call volume and the anticipated growth in this area necessitates the addition of a second unit at this location. The ability to secure another site for an additional station is unlikely in this densely populated region. The most practical method to insure adequate emergency coverage is by planning for another engine company to be co-located at this

site.

The funding plan, which had been approved previously in 2001 at an estimated cost of \$43.2 million, will now cost close to \$58 million—\$47 million of which is earmarked for work on 12 new, renovated or expanded fire stations. The increase is due to rising construction and bid costs that have occurred over the past three years. The Council opted not to follow the City Manager's recommendation to cut the number of fire stations being funded from 12 to eight, which would have kept the cost at the 2001 level.

"I'm pleased that the two District Three sites remained on the funding list," said Atkins. "Making sure our urban neighborhoods receive the funds they need to repair and improve our aging facilities continues to be one of my top priorities in office."

The remaining \$10.9 million will pay for seven new or renovated lifeguard stations.

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